

COLORADO CANYONS NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA
Mack Ridge Working Group Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2002

Attendees:

John Foster	Nadja Brozina	Chris Pipkin
Greg Gnesios	Tommy Collins	Connie Rosenthal
Dan Rosenthal	Jim Cooper	Jane Ross
Robert Anthony	Kevin Foote	Lovell Sasser
Gene Arnesen	Pat Kennedy	Julie Stotler
Sue Benjamin	Neal McKinstry	

Greetings and Introductions

The meeting minutes from March 27, 2002, were reviewed.

Working Group Discussions

Chris Pipkin, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Recreation Technician, raised an issue from these minutes concerning the Working Group's consensus in allowing the Mack Ridge area to remain as day-use only. Chris spoke as the representative for non-local, recreational users who have expressed a desire for camping opportunities in this area of the Colorado Canyons National Conservation Area (CCNCA). Some debate ensued about the desire to avoid revisiting issues that had been addressed in the Ruby Canyon/Black Ridge Integrated Resource Management Plan. It was decided that future camping in the area, whether it is managed by the BLM or done through enterprise partnerships with private entities, is probably contingent upon the acquisition of in-holdings, specifically the state-owned land located south of I-70, at the northern border of the CCNCA. This issue can be incorporated into the plan as a management alternative, but the group maintains its position as leaving Mack Ridge as a day-use area.

Robin Lacy, BLM Realty Specialist, discussed BLM initiatives in acquiring land in the National Conservation Area (NCA). The process for acquiring in-holdings requires the development, by both parties, of an exchange (or sale) proposal appraisal of the land in question. A feasibility study must be accomplished, the transfer proven to be in the public's best interest, cultural resource surveys performed, and finally, an environmental impact analysis completed prior to the exchange/sale.

Acquisition of the state land bordering Mack Ridge has been discussed with the State Land Board, and they would consider an exchange (can be done with any land in the

state). The land currently offers no beneficial use, so the state would rather dispose of the entire parcel (including the portion north of I-70). Robin will contact the appropriate staff at the State Land Board to determine current status.

The land along Crow Bottom is privately owned, and discussions with the landowner indicate some interest in a possible land exchange on Roan Creek. Kevin Foote can assist in the preparation of the proposal language concerning public value of the area.

Other options discussed are acquiring smaller parcels at key sites, such as potential trailhead development with easement acquisitions on adjacent lands, and pursuing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) that would give BLM management authority until the acquisition is completed.

While land acquisition is a lengthy process and may not be accomplished prior to the completion of the resource management plan, the Working Group was reminded that future management of those lands is important to this planning process.

Management of the I-70 frontage road was discussed. Traffic minimization is desired by most in the group, but the area does offer dispersed parking opportunities and is used by the community. The BLM's authority to make decisions on the road's use is uncertain.

Final items requiring input:

1. Kevin asked members to begin rating the different trails in the Mack Ridge area. Rate the trails for your own activity only, and rate them from hardest in the area to easiest in the area, with no comparison to other areas or other activities.
2. As part of the rating exercise, keep a list of information that should be included at trailheads, with footnotes on what type of experiences can be expected on various trails.
3. Determine what information the kiosks need.
4. Determine locations that should be designated as trailheads and parking areas.

The meeting was adjourned.